



Board of Dental Examiners

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Arpana S. Verma Board Chair – Francis X. McLaughlin, Jr., Executive Director

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March 24, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 440 - Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland – Establishment-Letter of Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners is submitting this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 440 - Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland. As introduced, the Commission consists of a number of individuals including: two members of the Senate of Maryland, two members of the House of Delegates, the Secretary of Health or the Secretary's designee, the Chairman of the Maryland Health Care Commission, **and the executive directors of each Maryland health occupations board**. The Secretary of Health serves as the chair. The State agencies represented on the Commission will jointly provide staff for the Commission.

With regard to the State's health occupations boards, the Commission is charged with examining: (1) Which health occupations boards have backlogs of applicants for licensure and certification; (2) Determining whether expediting or streamlining the licensing or certification process for specific health occupations is a viable option; (3) Determining whether implementing additional temporary licensure or certification for specific health occupations is a viable option; (4) The relationship between the health occupations boards and the Maryland Department of Health to determine what authority the Secretary should have over the boards, and what additional support the Department of Health could provide the boards to assist with workloads, overhead, staffing, technology improvements, and other areas identified by the Commission

As amended, the Dental Board and several other boards will no longer be represented on the Commission. The only boards represented will be the Board of Physicians, the Board of Nursing, the Board of Pharmacy, and the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists.

The Dental Board has been negatively impacted by a lack of staffing for several years. It is only recently that the Board has been able to hire essential personnel especially in its Compliance Unit. For example, for over 17 months the Board was left with only one investigator who was charged with performing all investigative work and responding to complainants' inquiries. The result was a backlog that the Board is just now beginning to address. The Board continues to face a number of hurdles, sometimes waiting upwards of between one and a half to two years to fill vacant PIN positions. Providing a forum to discuss staffing issues, the Board's need for autonomy, and the Board's relationship with the Department of Health would be welcome and

productive. **Simply put, the Board asks that the amendment removing it from the Commission be stricken, and that it be given a seat at the table to discuss these issues in a meaningful way.**

The Dental Board therefore requests that SB 440 receive a favorable report with the suggested amendments.

I hope that this information is helpful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Dr. Arpana Verma, Board President at 240-498-8159, asverma93@gmail.com, or Dr. Edwin Morris, the Board's Legislative Committee Chair at 410-218-4203. In addition, the Board's Executive Director, Mr. Frank McLaughlin may be reached at 443-878-5253, frank.mclaughlin@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arpana S. Verma', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Arpana S. Verma, D.D.S.
Board President

The opinion of the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners expressed in this letter does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the administration.